

[Learning the Trade]

Beliefs & Customs - Folkstuff

Accession no. W8155

Date received 10/10/40

Consignment no. 1

Shipped from Wash. off.

Label

Amount 3 p incl 2 forms

WPA L.C. PROJECT Writers' UNIT

Form—3 Folklore Collection (or Type)

Title ...Learning the trade

Place of origin New York Date 1939 (N.D.C.)

Project worker Terry Roth

Project editor

Remarks Form C with text W8155

FOLKLORE

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NEW YORK 1939 Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview Section I [1?]

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Terry Roth ————— Sam Schwartz

ADDRESS 47 West 69th Street, N.Y.C. 152 West 15th Street, N.Y.C.

DATE March 22, 1939

SUBJECT Learning The Trade

1. Date and time of interview March 14 - Noon
2. Place of interview Wiesen & Sons
3. Name and address of informant Mr. Gold
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. Sam Schwartz
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
Sam Schwartz
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

Library of Congress

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Terry Roth ————— Sam Schwartz

ADDRESS 47 W. 69th Street, N.Y.C. 152 W. 13th Street, N.Y.C.

DATE March 22, 1939

SUBJECT Learning The Trade LEARNING THE TRADE

"When the immigrants used to come to this country, I DON'T SAY people were smarter to work up to work for themselves. Naturally, they know how they were living. They tried to take a greena soon he used to come to this country, for learning a trade. I paid twice. My father used to live on a farm. So what did I know of a trade? I came to this country. I had a sister here. So she said the best thing is for me to start learning a cloakmaker.

"Find out a man with work. Give him ten dollars and work two weeks for nothing."

I find out a lontsmon. When I was in London I met a man once. That was in 1900. That time there was a crisis for the greena. The people are actually starving. They were laying in in the street. Starving from hunger. So, I met this lontsmon. He was standing in the street. I was well off already. So I took him home. AND I gave him a suit of clothes. AND a pair of shoes. AND I fixed him up something to eat. THEN I went to Africa and all the time I used to write him letters.

When I came to the United States he was a long time cloakmaker.

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Since he is over here. So he says to me when I'm asking he should teach me to be a cloakmaker.

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"Myself, I would learn you for nothing. But my partner wouldn't let me." So I gave him ten dollars and for two weeks I work for nothing. The third week he gives me two and a half dollars. After all, I was a big fellow. 23 years old. After I was working about three weeks I say to him. "Simon, how's about learning me a little more?" So he says. "Gold, if you would be a stranger, it would be difficult. But being you're a friend, it's different. Now it's bus. So you work whatever we give you to turn out. When it'll come the slow season, I'm learning you from A to Z." I took his word for it. And I worked the season. And then his partner lets me off. He don't want me no more. For the next season he isn't needing me. Who is going to take a greena? And pay nine or ten dollars? After all I didn't know the trade. So I ate up all the money. And I had no trade. Then I met another feller.

"I'll learn you" he says. "Pay me ten dollars and work two weeks for nothing." I paid. That feller really learned me the trade. So far, that I kept up the job that I was working for three years. After that, was a strike. That's how it was. Those bosses. They would look on your face and see the character. Me! I was always easy going, the way you look at me now. So with me they could do that. But it didn't take me long to see who is my friend."